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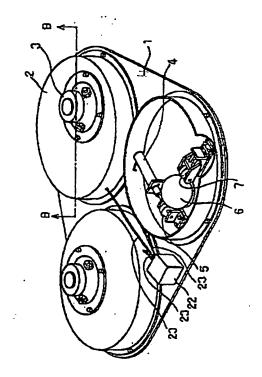
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(54)【発明の名称】 走行装置

(57)【要約】

【目的】 一つの回転体に対して一つの駆動巡にする事により簡単な構成で走行方向を自在に変えられ、駆動源の力を効率的に利用することのできる走行装置を提供することを目的とする。

【構成】 基板1上に、駆動液であるモータ4と、このモータ4の出力軸と経結され、駆動力を伝達する回転体からなる円盤5とが図示しないネジにより締結固定されている。円盤5から駆動力を受ける球体6は、アイドラ7と円盤5との間に嵌入している。このモータ4、円塁5、球体6、アイドラ7とが一組になり、正三角形の頂点に位置する基板1上に3組配設されている。上記のモータ4を制御部22にて制御し、定行装置を所望の走行方向へ駆動する。



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【特許請求の範囲】

【請求項1】 同一または連結されたハウジングと、 このハウジングに回転自在に支持され、少なくとも3個 配される球形状の回転体と、

前記ハウジングに預報されると共に、1個の回転体に対して1個配され、前記回転体を回転駆動する駆動源と、を備え、前記回転体が平面に接地するときに、前記駆動源を駆動することにより平面上で自在な方向に走行せしめるように構成したことを特徴とする定行装置。

【発明の詳細な説明】

[0001]

【産業上の利用分野】本発明は、移動ロボットをはじめ 玩具、自動車などに利用できる生行装置に関するもので ある。

[0002]

【従来の技術】従来、定行装置としては、例えば、特開 昭60-104475号公報に示されるように、回転体 に球体を用い、球体1ケに接した2ケの駆動源にて前 後、左右、あるいは斜め方向に回転可能なものを2組用 いることにより全方向の移動や自転ができるようにした 20 ものがある。

【0003】その代表例の概要を図8に示し、この図に基づき説明する。ハウジング29と一体のハウジング基板30の底面には、球31、32、33が従勤輪として回転目在になるように設けられている。ハウジング29と一体のハウジング基板30に球36、37が嵌入された円筒状支持体34、35が固定されている。支持体34、35の側面には開口部34a、34b、35a、35bがそれぞれの支持体の中心より互いに90度の位置に設けられている。その開口部を選してゴムタイヤ38、39、40、41にはモータ42、43、44、45が取り付けてある。

【0004】図9は図8のA-A線画面を示す側面図で ある。 球37はハウジング基板30に設けられた円形の 閉口部30aより突出して平面54と接触している。こ の装置の動作は、図8のX軸方向56に走行させる場合 はモータ42とモータ44を同方向に同速度で回転させ る。Y軸方向55に走行させるにはモータ43とモータ 45を同方向に同速度で回転させる。 さらにX軸とY軸 40 とは異なる矢印57で示す斜め方向に走行させる場合 は、モータ42とモータ44を同方向に回転させると同 時にモータ43とモータ45も同方向に回転させる。こ のときモータ42とモータ44の速度は同一とし (この 回転速度をNxとする)、モータ43とモータ45の速 度も同一とする(この回転速度をNyとする)。そして 回転速度Nxと回転速度Nyの大きさを変えることによ り斜め方向に走行する角度を設定する。またハウジング 29を回動させるにはモータ42とモータ44の回転方

ジング29の回動軸を任意の位置に設定し走行するようにしたもの等がある。

[0005]

【発明が解決しようとする課題】しかしながら、図8で述べた装置は、回転体である球体1ケに対して、少なくとも駆動源が2ケ必要となるため回転体である球体の数の2倍の数の駆動源を有することになり、装置全体の構成と回転体に与える駆動力の制御が複雑になるという問題がある。

10 【0006】機械設計(日刊工業新図社発行)の第36 差郊15号(1992年11月号)には、図10(a) に示すような装置が開示されており、この走行装置によ り上記の問題点を解決することができる。この走行装置 は、図10(b)に示すように、3つの車輪62が軍体 61に回転可能に連結されているもので、車輪62は、 夫々矢印方向に回転する。また、この車輪62には、夫 々の車輪62に対して直角方向に回転可能なローラ63 が配されている。

【0007】しかしながら、図10に示す走行装置60 は、車略62が矢印方向にしか回転できないために、路 面上で走行する場合に、例えば、Y方向に進む場合、車 略Aはローラ63が回転するために滑らないが、車輪 B、Cは滑りながら進むことになる。その他の方向に逃 む場合にも、何れかの車輪が滑る必要がある。

【0008】また、車輪62と路面上とは級接触であるために、旋回を行う場合には、一つの車輪62において 頭a、b、cは旋回半径が異なるために、滑りが無いためには速度が同じではいけない。しかしながら、車輪62の回転速度は内周囲と外周囲を問わず一定であるために滑りが生じる。滑りが生じると、駆動源から伝達した力の損失があり、効率的に走行装置を走行させることができないという問題がある。

【0009】そこで、本発明上、一つの回転体に対して一つの駆動源にする事により簡単な構成で走行方向を自在に変えられ、駆動源の力を効率的に利用することのできる走行装置を提供することを目的とするものである。 【0010】

【課題を解決するための手段】本発明は、上記目的を達成するために、同一または運結されたハウジングと、このハウジングに回転目在に支持され、少なくとも3個配される球形状の回転体と、前記ハウジングに積載されると共に、1個の回転体に対して1個配され、前記回転体を回転駆動する駆動源と、この駆動源の駆動を制御する制御部と、を備え、前記回転体が平面に接地するときに、前記駆動源を駆動することにより平面上で自在な方向に定行せしめるように構成したことを特徴とする走行装置を採用するものである。

[0011]

29を自動させるにはモーダ42とモーダ44の回転方 【作用】上記稿成よりなる本発明の走行装置によれば、 向と速度をそれぞれ単独に変化させることにより、ハウ 50 少なくとも3個の球状の回転体と、この回転体に対して 一つづつ配された駆動限とを有する。少なくとも3個の 回転体を有するため、この走行装置は安定する。回転体 が球形状よりなるために何れの方向にも回転可能であ り、滑りを生じないので、駆動源の力を効率的に利用す ることができる。

【0012】また、一個の回転体に対して一個の駆動源よりなるため、回転体が3個の時には駆動源が3個で済み、制御部で制御する駆動源が少なくなるので、制御が簡素化される。

[0013]

【実施例】以下、本発明の実施例について図面を参照し て説明する、図1は、本発明の第1実施別の走行装置の 構造を表した斜視図である。 同図においてハウジング2 と、このハウジング2と一体に設けられた平板状の基板 1とを配する。この基板1上には、駆動液であるモータ 4と、このモータ4の出力軸と締結され、駆動力を伝達 する回転体からなる円盤5とが図示しないネジにより締 結固定されている。 円盤5から駆動力を受ける回転体で ある球体6は、円盤5とは球体6に対して反対側に設け られ、球体6と円盤5の間で摩控力が生じるように球体 20 6を押しつける回転体であるアイドラ7(少なくとも1 ケ)と円盤5との間に嵌入している。アイドラ7は図示 しないネジにより締結固定されている。球体6が円盤5 とアイドラ7との間から抜けないように、ハウジング2 には球体6を上側から押さえるステイ3が設けられてい ٥.

【0014】前述の駆動液であるモータ4は回転力を生ずる他の駆動液でもよい。また駆動力を伝達する円盤 5、球体6を押しつけるアイドラ7は金属でできているが、樹脂、ゴムでもよい。また、駆動力を受ける球体6 30はゴムでできているが、金属、樹脂でもよい。

【0016】3個の球体6の中心が三角形を形成し、か 40 つ円盛5と球体6の接点と球体6の中心を結んだ線3本が三角形を形成するか、または1点で交わるように配置する。円盤5、球体6、アイドラ7の高さ関係については図3により説明する。

【0017】図3は図1に示した本発明の実施例の走行 装置の部分的なB-B級断面を表す図である。本義団 は、この表面が走行する平面8(例えば床面、造路面な ど)に対して3ケの球体6にて支えられている。球体6 は基板1に設けられた閉口部12より突出して平面8と 扱している。球体6は基板1が持ち上げられても閉口部 50 12より寄ちないように、基板1が持ち上げられ、球体6が下がった時に、少なくとも3ケの回転体であるペアリング13にて支えられるようになっている。ただし平面8と球体6が投している間は球体6とペアリング13は終れている。

【0018】円盤5、球体6、アイドラ7の高さの位置 関係は球体6の中心の高さと等しい位置に円盤5とアイドラ7の中心があるようにする。アイドラ7の押しつけ 力は球体6と平面8の間の厚強力に打ち勝つ力になるよ 10 うに設定する。

【0019】球体6は、ステイ3にネジ11で締結固定されている少なくとも1ケの回転体であるベアリング9と接しており、装置全体の重さを路面8に対して法線方向に支えている。

【0020】また、ステイ3にネジ11で締結固定され ている少なくとも3ケの回転体である長さ調節目在なキ ャスタ10は、ペアリング9やペアリング13が突発的 に動いたとしても、円盤5と球体6とアイドラ7との流 正な位置関係を保つために設けられている。このキャス タ10は、通常は球体6とは接していず、球体6が上部 方向に動いた時に接する構成をとる。また、球体6とベ アリング9の路面8と平行な方向の位置関係は、球体6 の中心とベアリング9の中心が等しくなるようにする。 【0021】次に、この装置の動作を説明する。本走行 表置を任意の方向へ直進させようとする場合、 図4にお いて操縦操作性向上のため3個の円盤5の半径 r を等し くし、球体6の半径Rを3個とも等しくしておく。な お、円盛5を、図示の如く円繰5a、5b、5cとし、 失々の円型に回転力を与える球体6を、球体6a、6 b、6cとする。3個の球体6の各々の中心は正三角形 STUを形成する。本定行装置の重心Gの移動方向を heta、堂心Gの速度 ϵ Vとする。また円 \pm 5と球体 ϵ 0投 点と球体6の中心点を結んでできる直線で形成される三 角形XYZも正三角形であり三角形STUとの位置関係 は重心は等しいが位相は60度ずれている。ここで円盤 5a、5b、5cに与えるモータ4の回転数をNi、N 2、N3 とすると、次式の如く、 制御部22が夫々の円 録5a、5b、5cに回転数を与える。

[0022]

[数1] $N_1 = VCOS \theta / (2\pi r)$ [0023]

[数2] $N_2 = VCCS (60-\theta)/(2\pi r)$

[0024]

【数3】N3 = VOIS (60+8)/(2πr) 上記の数式の如く、モータ4の回転数を制御し、円盛5 を介して球体6に回転力を与えることにより球体6と平 面8が接していないときには、3ケの球体6は各々図に 示す矢印P, Q, Rの方向に回転する。しかしながら、 球体6と平面8が接すると、3ケの球体6が平面8に拘 束されるために、これらの3ケの球体よりなる本装置は hetaと同じ方向に回転する。すなわち三角形XYZの重心 Gはheta方向に速度Yで直進する。そのため \overline{Y} 面8に対し て平行な面での自在な走行ができる。

【0025】以上の走行は本走行装置が回動する事なく 元の状態と平行な状態を保持して行われるものである が、以下に説明する如く、本走行装置を回動させること も可能である。

【0026】図5に示すように、図4と同様な装置において、球体6a、6b,6cの中心を各々P1、P1、P2とおき、三角形XYZの重心Gとの距離をdとおく。重心Gを原点としてx,y座原を考えると、任意の点P(x1、y1)を中心としてWという回転速度にて回動させたい時には、次式の如く制御部22がモータ4の回転数N1、N1、N2を制御し、夫々の円盤5a、5b、5cに回転を与える。

[0027]

【数4】Ni =WLi · COS φ1 / (2πr)

[0028]

【数5】 $N_2 = WL_2 \cdot COS \phi_2 / (2\pi r)$

[0029]

【数6】N3 =WL2 ·005 ϕ_2 / (2 π r)

ただし、L1 、L1 、L2 、 φ1 、 φ2 、 φ8 は、以下 の式よりなる。

[0030]

【数7】 $L_1^2 = L_1^2 + d_1^2 - 2Ld \cdot \cos \delta_1$

[0031]

【数8】L22=L2 +d2 -2Ld·OS 82

[0032]

[数9] $L_2^2 = L^2 + d^2 - 2Ld - 00S \delta_9$

[0033]

【数10】

 $\phi_1 = \cos^{-1}((L_1^2 + d^2 - L^2) / (2L_1 d))$

[0034]

【数11】

 $\phi_2 = CDS^{-1} ((L_2^2 + d^2 - L^2) / (2L_2 d))$

[0035]

【数12】

φs = COS -1 ((L₂2+d² -L²)/(2L₃ d)) また、δ₁、δ₂、δ₃、θ、Lは、以下の式よりな

る.

[0036]

【数13】 $\delta_1 = 180 - \theta$

[0037]

【数14】 $\delta_2 = 60 - 8$

[0038]

【数15】83 =60+8

[0039]

【数16】8=tan-1(x1/y1)

[0040]

【数17】L=(x12+y12)1/2

上記数式の如く、円盤5a、5b、5cに回転を与えることにより、本定行表面の回動中心点Pを任意の位置に設定でき、円弧上の走行軌跡を描くことができる。

【0041】このように本実施例は、走行方向を自在に 変えられると言う機能を備えているが、その構成は球体 3ケ、モータ3ケを超み合わせた簡単なものである。な お、図2を用いてハウジング2、ステイ3、モータ4、 円盛5、球体6、アイドラ7の1組が基盤1と平行な平 面方向においてどのように配置するか、また円盤5や球 10 体6の寸法関係はどうなるかを第1の実施例で説明した が、円盤5の半径は各々違っていてもよく、円盤5の半 径に合わせて回転数を制御すれば良い。

【0042】また、球体6の半径が各々違っていても良く、この時にも球体6の半径に合わせてモータ4が与える回転数を制御すれば良い。また、3個の球体6の各々の中心が形成する三角形XYZは正三角形と違っていてもよい。また、円盤5と球体6の接点と球体6の中心を結んでできる直線で形成する三角形STUは正三角形と違っていても良い。また三角形XYZと三角形STUの型心は一致していなくてもよいし、位相はどの位置にあってもよい。夫々の場合において、上記の数式を補正して、制御を行えば良い。

【0043】また、図3、図6に示すように、球体6の保持法として、アイドラ7から球体6に対して平面8と水平に与えられる力をモータ4までは伝えず、円盤5までで受けるために、円盤5の軸15の両側に2ケのベアリング16を装着し、モータ4とは、連結部材であるカップリング17にて連結する。もしくは、円盤5自体に少なくとも1ケのベアリングを装着しても良いし、円盤305目体をベアリングにしても良い。

【0044】また、球体6が歪んだり平面8方向と水平な方向に動いたときにでもアイドラフが球体6に力を加え続けられるように、図3に示すように、アイドラフを保持するステイ19が平面8と水平な方向に自在に移動できるように、図示していないリニアガイドペアリングを装着し、かつステイ19にバネ18を装着する。アイドラフは円盤5と同様にベアリングで受けても良い。

【0045】なお、球体6に対して平面8と垂直な力が 加わるときには、図3のようにベアリング9で力を受け 40 ていたが、図7のように球体6を多数の小球20で受け ても良い。この小球19は球体6が回転するにともない

【0046】また、上記の実施例では、制御部22に与える信号をリモコンにて送信する構成としたが、制御部22に対して直接信号を与える構成としても良い。

[0047]

小球移動通路21を転動する。

【発明の効果】以上のように本発明の走行装置は、少なくとも3ケの駆動源と、1ケの駆動源により回転運動を 与えられる少なくとも1ケの回転体により全方向を目在

50 に走行できる特長を持つ。一つの回転体に対して一つの

驱動源にて駆動されるので、本発明の走行装置では操縦 操作が簡単であり、構成も単純、走行安定性もあり、そ して安価に具体化できるという優れた効果がある。

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【0048】また、回転体が球形状を呈するので、回転体が滑りを生じず、回転体に与えられた駆動力を効率的に利用することができる。

【図面の簡単な説明】

【図1】本発明の実施例に係わる走行装置の部分的な断面を持つ斜視図。

【図2】本発明の実施別に係わる走行装置の要素の配置 10 図。

【図3】図3は図1のB-B線断面を示す側面図。

【図4】本発明に係わる走行装置の動作を示す模式図。

【図5】本発明に係わる走行装置の動作を示す模式図。

【図6】球体6の保持法の他の実施例。

【図7】球体6の保持法の他の実施例。

【図8】従来の走行装置の部分的断面を示す平面図、

【図9】図9のA-A線所面を示す側面図。

【図10】従来の走行装置を示す図である。

【符号の説明】

1 基板

2 ハウジング

3 スティ

4 モータ

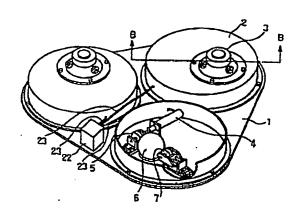
5 円盤·

6 球体

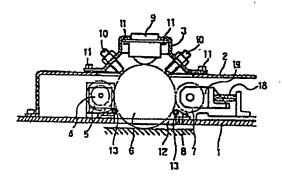
7 アイドラ

8 平面

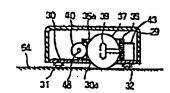
【図1】



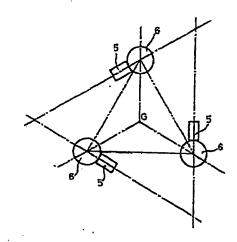
[図3]



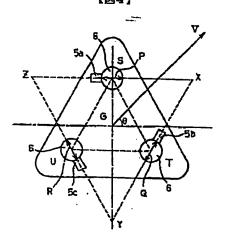
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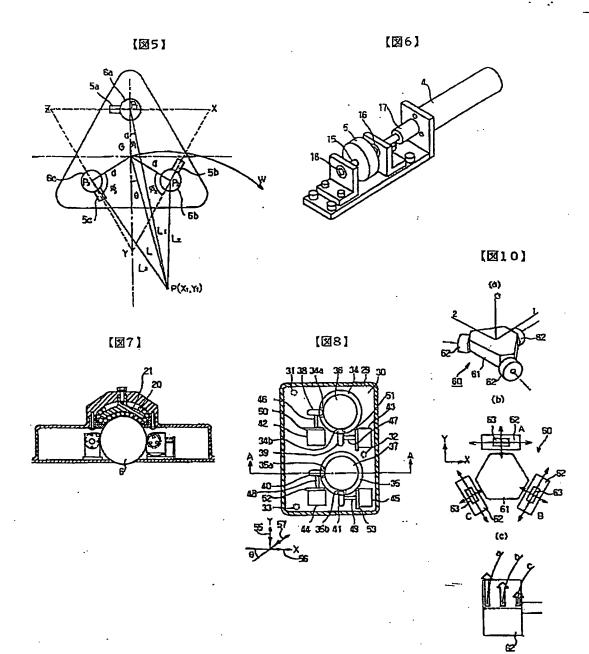


【図2】



【図4】





(Translation for Ref. nF)

- (19) Patent Office of Japan (JP)
- (12) Official Gazette of Laid-Open Patent Application (Kokai) (A)
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(54) [Title of Invention] Rolling Device

(57) [Summary]

[Objective] To provide a rolling device which freely changes the rolling or traveling direction as it is simply configured of a single driving device relative to a single rotor and which efficiently uses the force of the drive source.

[Constitution]

A motor 4 which is the drive source and a drive shaft for this motor 4 are connected on top of a base 1. A plate 5 which is made up of a rotor which transmits the drive force is connected and fixed by a screw (not shown in drawing). A sphere which receives the drive force from the plate 5 fits into an idler 7 and the plate 5. The motor 4, the plate 5, the sphere 6 and the idler 7 form one set and three sets of these are disposed on the base 1 which is positioned at the vertex which is shaped like a right triangle. The aforementioned motor 4 is controlled by a control part 22 and the rolling device is driven in the desired rolling direction.

SPECIFICATION

[Scope of Patent Claim]

[Claim 1] A rolling device which is provided with the same or a connected housing, at least three spherical rotors which are supported so that they can rotate freely on this housing; drive sources which are loaded onto said housing, one drive source being disposed for a single rotor, so that they turn and drive said rotors; the rolling device being configured so that when said rotors make contact with a plane surface, it can roll in any direction on the plane surface by driving said drive source.

[Detailed Description of the Invention]

[0001]

[Field of Industrial Use] The present invention relates to a rolling device which can be used first and foremost for mobile robots as well as for toys and automobiles.

[0002]

[Description of the Prior Art] Prior art rolling devices such as the one disclosed in the Official Gazette for Laid-Open Patent Application 60-104475 made use of spheres on the rotors and were able to move other objects and to move automatically by using two groups of objects which could rotate in front and behind, left to right, or at an incline at two drive sources which made contact with a single sphere.

[0003]

Figure 8 indicates an outline form of an example of this and our explanation will be based on this drawing. Spheres 31, 32 and 33 are placed on the base of housing 29 and integrated housing base 30 so that they can rotate freely as a driven wheel. Plate-shaped supports 34 and 35 into which spheres 36 and 37 have been inserted are fixed on the housing 29 and integrated housing base 30. Opening parts 34a, 34b, 35a and 35b are placed at a 90° angle from the center of the support. Rubber tires 38, 39, 40 and 41 make contact with spheres 36 and 37 via these opening parts. Motors 42, 43, 44 and 45 are attached to these rubber tires 38, 39, 40 and 41.

[0004]

Figure 9 is a lateral sectional view of line A-A in Figure 8. Sphere 37 protrudes from circular opening part 30a which is disposed on housing base 30 and makes contact with plane surface 54. When rolling in direction 56 on the X axis in Figure 8, the action of this device is such that motor 42 and motor 44 are turned at the same velocity in the same direction. When rolling in direction 55 on the Y axis, motor 43 and motor 45 are turned at the same velocity in the same direction. When rolling in an inclined direction indicated by arrow 57 with an X axis and a Y axis which are different, motor 42 and motor 44 are turned in the same direction and at the same time, motor 43 and motor 46 are turned in the same direction. At this time, the velocity of motor 42 and motor 44 are the same (this turning velocity is indicated as Nx and the velocity of motor 43 and motor 45 are the same (this turning velocity is indicated as Ny). Thus, by changing the size of turning velocity Nx and turning velocity Ny, an angle is set up which makes it possible to roll in an inclined direction. By unilaterally changing the turning direction and the velocity of motor 42 and motor 44 in turning housing 29, the turning shaft of housing 29 is set at any position and rolling takes place.

[0005]

[Problems Which the Present Invention Attempts to Resolve] However, the device indicated in Figure 8 required at least two drive sources for a single sphere which was the rotor. As a result, it had twice as many drive sources as there were spheres (which were the rotors) and there were problems in that the configuration of the overall device and control of the drive force which was provided to the rotor was complicated.

[0006]

The device indicated in Figure 10 (a) is disclosed in Mechanical Design (published by Nikkan Kogyo Shimbun Press), Vol. 36, No. 15 (November, 1992) and it resolves the problems indicated above by virtue of the rolling device. This rolling device has three wheels 62 as indicated in Figure 10 (b) which are connected to the body 61 so that they can rotate. Wheel 62 turns in the direction indicated by the arrows. In addition, rollers 63 which can turn at a right angle to the various wheels 62 are disposed on this wheel 62.

[0007]

However, the rolling device 60 indicated in Figure 10 has a wheel 62 which can turn only in the direction indicated by the arrow. As a result, when one is traveling on the surface of a road, for example, when proceeding in direction Y, the wheel A does not slide since roller 63 turns. However, wheels B and C proceed by sliding. Even if [the wheels] proceed in another direction,

some sort of wheel must slide.

[0008]

Also, since wheel 62 and the road surface make linear contact, when turning is carried out, arcs a, b and c have different turning radii on a single wheel 62 so that the velocity must not be the same since there is no sliding. Nevertheless, the turning velocity of wheel 62 is constant regardless of the internal periphery or the external periphery so that sliding arises. The force transferred from the drive source is lost and it is not possible for the rolling device to travel efficiently.

[0009]

Therefore, it is an object of the present invention to provide a rolling device which can readily change the traveling direction due to its simple configuration by using a single drive source for a single rotor and which can efficiently use the force of the driving source.

[0010]

[Means Used to Resolve These Problems] In order to resolve the aforementioned problems, the present invention is provided with the same or a connected housing, at least three spherical rotors which are supported so that they turn freely on this housing and a drive source which turns and drives the aforementioned rotors, one drive being disposed for one rotor, which are loaded onto said housing and a control part which controls the drive of this drive source and which is configured so that rolling takes place in any direction on a flat surface by driving the aforementioned drive source when the rotor makes contact with the flat surface.

[0011]

[Operations] According to the process of the rolling device in the present invention with the aforementioned configuration, it is provided with at least three spherical rotors and a single drive source disposed for each one of these rotors. Since it has at least three rotors, the rolling device is stable. Since the rotors are spherical, they can turn in any direction. As there is no sliding, the force from the drive source can be used efficiently.

[0012]

In addition, since there is a single drive source for a single rotor, there are three drive sources when there are three rotors. Since the drive source which is controlled by the control part diminishes, the control process is simplified.

[0013]

[Working Embodiment of the Invention] Next, we shall explain a working embodiment of the present invention referring to the drawings. Figure 1 is an inclined view of the configuration of the first working embodiment of the present invention. Housing 2 and flat base 1 which is placed so that it forms an integral piece with this housing are disposed in this figure. Motor 4 which is a drive source is connected to the output shaft of this motor 4 and plate 5 which is made up of a rotor which transmits the drive force is connected and fixed by a screw (not shown in drawing) on this base 1. Sphere 6 which is a rotor which receives the drive force from plate 5 is placed so that plate 5 is opposite sphere 6 and fits between an idler 7 (at least one of

these)—which is a rotor which pushes sphere 6-and plate 5 so that friction occurs between sphere 6 and plate 5. Idler 7 is connected and fixed by a screw (not shown in drawing). A stay 3 which presses sphere 6 from the top is disposed in the housing 2 so that sphere does not fall out of place between plate 5 and idler 7.

[0014]

Motor 4, which is the drive source as indicated previously, may be another type of drive source which generates torque. Plate 5 which transfers the drive force and idler 7 which presses in sphere 6 are made of metal; however, they may also be made of resin or rubber. Sphere 6 which receives the drive force is made of rubber, however, it may also be made of metal or resin.

[0015]

The housing 2, stay 3, motor 4, plate 5, sphere 6 and idler 7 mentioned previously form a single set and at least three sets are disposed on the base 1. In addition, control part 22 which controls the drive force which is provided to the motor 4 is connected to motor 4 via a lead wire 23. Support signals which provide instructions for the rolling direction are sent from a remote control (not shown in drawing) to this control part 22. Figure 2 explains the disposition of the aforementioned three sets in a plane surface direction which is parallel to base 1.

[0016]

The center of the three spheres 6 form a triangle and three lines which connect the contact point of plate 5 and sphere 6 and the center of sphere 6 either form a triangle or are disposed so that they intersect at one point. Figure 3 indicates the height of plate 5, sphere 6 and idler 7.

[0017]

Figure 3 is a diagram which indicates a partial section along line B-B in the rolling device in the working embodiment of the present invention. This device is supported by three spheres 6 relative to the plane surface (for example, the floor, a road and the like) which the device travels on. Sphere 6 protrudes from the opening part 12 which is set on base 1 and makes contact with plane surface 8. Sphere 6 is supported by at least three bearings 13 (which are rotors) when base 1 is lifted up and sphere 6 is lowered so that even if base 1 is lifted up it does not fall from opening part 12. However, while plane surface 8 and sphere 6 make contact, sphere 6 and bearing 13 are separated.

[0018]

The positioning of the heights of plate 5, sphere 6 and idler 7 is made so that the center of plate 5 and idler 7 is equal to the height of the center of sphere 6. The setting is made so that the pushing force of idler 7 overcomes the friction arising between sphere 6 and plane surface 8.

[0019]

Sphere 6 makes contact with at least one bearing (which is the rotor) which is connected and fixed to stay 3 with screw 11 and the weight of the overall device is supported in the normal direction relative to the road surface 8.

[0020]

At least three casters 10-which are rotors--whose length can be readily adjusted and which are connected and fixed to stay 3 with a screw are placed to maintain the correct positioning between plate 5, sphere 6 and idler 7 even if bearing 9 and bearing 13 come into play unexpectedly. These casters 10 usually do not make contact with the sphere 6 and are configured so that they make contact when sphere 6 comes into play in the upper direction. In addition, the positioning in a direction which is parallel to the sphere 6 and the road surface 8 of bearing 9 is such that the center of sphere 6 and the center of bearing 9 are the same.

[0021]

Next, we shall explain how the device is operated. When this device is pushed forward in any direction, the radii r of the three bases are made equal to improve the sustained maneuverability in Figure 4 and the radii R of the three spheres 6 are made equal. Furthermore, the plates 5 are made into plate 5a, 5b and 5c. The spheres 6 which provide torque to the various plates are made into spheres 6a, 6b and 6c. The centers of each of these spheres 6 form a right triangle STU. The direction in which the center of gravity G of this rolling device is moved is 0 and the velocity of the center of gravity G is V. Triangle XYZ which is formed by a straight line which is made by joining the contact point of plate 5 and sphere 6 and the center point of sphere 6 is a right triangle. The positioning with triangle STU is such that the center of gravity is the same, however, the phase is off 60°. Here, when the number of rotations of motor 4 which are provided to plates 5a, 5b and 5c is N1, N2 and N3, control part 22 provides the number of rotations respectively to plates 5a, 5b and 5c as indicated in the following equations.

[0022] [Number 1] N1 = V cos θ / (2 π 4) [0023] [Number 2] N2 = V cos (60 - θ) / (2 π r) [0024]

[Number 3] N3 = V cos $(60 + \theta) / (2 \pi r)$

As indicated by the above equations, the number of rotations for the motor 4 is controlled, and torque is provided to the sphere 6 via the plate 5 so that sphere 6 and plane surface 8 do not make contact. At this time, the three spheres 6 turn in the directions of arrows P, Q and R indicated in the figures. Nevertheless, when sphere 6 makes contact with plane surface 8, the three spheres 6 are restrained on plane surface 8 so that the device which is made up of these three spheres turns in the same direction as θ . In other words, center of gravity G of triangle XYZ proceeds in direction θ at velocity V. Therefore, rolling can be readily carried out on a surface which is parallel to plane surface 8.

[0025]

The rolling process mentioned above is carried out by maintaining a state which is parallel to the

original state without the rolling device rotating. However, as will be explained further on, this rolling device can be rotated.

[0026]

As indicated in Figure 5, the centers of spheres 6a, 6b and 6c are P1, P2 and P3 in the same device as indicated in Figure 4 and the distance between center of gravity G of triangle XYZ is d. When the x and y coordinates are considered with center of gravity G as the origin, when rotation is carried out at a rotating velocity W with any point P (x1, y1) as the center, control part 22 controls the number of rotations N1, N2 and N3 of motor 4 and rotations are provided respectively to plates 5a, 5b and 5c.

```
[0027]
 [Number 4] N1 = W L1. \cos \phi 2 / (2\pi r)
 [0028]
 [Number 5] N2 = WL2 \cdot \cos \frac{\phi}{2} (2\pi r)
 [0029]
 [Number 6] N3 = WL3 . \cos \phi 3 / (2\pi r)
However, L1, L2, L3, \phi1, \phi2 and \phi3 have the following equations.
 [0030]
[Number 7] L12 = L2 + d2 - 2Ld \cdot \cos \delta 1
[0031]
[Number 8] L22 = L2 + d2 - 2Ld \cdot \cos \delta 2
[0032]
[Number 9] L22 = L2 + d2 - 2Ld \cdot \cos \delta 3
[Number 10] \phi 1 = \cos -1 ((L12 + d2 - L2)/(2L1 d))
[Number 11] \phi 2 = \cos -1 ((L22 + d2 - L2)/(2L2 d))
[0035]
[Number 12] \phi 3 = \cos -1 ((L32 + d2 - L2)/(2L3 d))
Also, \delta 1, \delta 2, \delta 3, \theta and L have the following equations.
[0036]
[Number 13] \delta 1 = 180 - \theta
[0037]
```

```
[Number 14] \delta 2 = 60 - \theta

[0038]

[Number 15] \delta 2 = 60 + \theta

[0039]

[Number 16] \theta = \tan -1 (x1/y1)

[0040]

[Number 17] L = (x12 + y12) \frac{1}{2}
```

As indicated by the above-mentioned equations, by providing rotations to plates 5a, 5b and 5c, the rotation center P of the rolling device can be set to any position and an arc-shaped rolling path is drawn.

[0041]

Thus, the working embodiment of the present invention is provided with a function in which the rolling direction can be readily changed, however, this configuration is a simple one which combines three spheres and three motors. Furthermore, it has been explained how the one set made up of a housing 2, a stay 3, a motor 4, a plate 5, a sphere 6 and an idler 7 is disposed in the direction of the plane surface which is parallel to the base 1 (using Figure 2) and what the nature of the formal relations of the plate 5 and the sphere 6 is in the first working embodiment of the present invention. However, the radii of the plates 5 may all be different and the number of rotations may be controlled to fit the radii of plate 5.

[0042]

The radii of the sphere 6 may all be different and the number of rotations provided by the motor 4 may be controlled to fit the radii of the spheres 6 at this time as well. The triangle XYZ which is formed by the respective centers of the three spheres 6 may be different from a right triangle. In addition, the triangle STU which is formed by a straight line which can connect the contact point of the plate 5 and the sphere 6 and the center of the sphere 6 may be different from a right triangle. The centers of gravity of triangle XYZ and triangle STU need not coincide. The phase may be at any position. In various cases, the above-mentioned equations may be compensated for and control may be carried out.

[0043]

As indicated in Figure 3 and Figure 6, the force provided which is horizontal to the plane surface 8 relative to the sphere 6 is not transferred from the idler 7 to the motor 4 as a means of retaining sphere 6. In order to receive [the force] as far as the plate 5, two bearings are mounted on both sides of the shaft 15 of the plate 5 and motor 4 is connected using a coupling 17 which is a connecting member. If at least one bearing may be mounted to the plate 5 itself, the plate 5 itself may be made into a bearing.

[0044]

Even when the sphere 6 becomes deformed or moves in a direction which is horizontal to the direction of plane surface 8, a linear guide bearing (not shown in figure) is mounted and a spring

18 is mounted on stay 19 so that the idler 7 can continue to provide force to the sphere 6 and so that stay 19 which retains the idler 7 can move freely in a direction which is horizontal to the plate surface 8, as indicated in Figure 3. Idler 7 may be received by the bearing just like plate 5.

[0045]

Furthermore, when force which is vertical to the plane surface 8 is applied to sphere 6, the force is received by bearing 9, as indicated in Figure 3. However, sphere 6 may also be received by a large number of small balls 20, as indicated in Figure 7. These small balls 19 roll along the small ball path of motion 21 as sphere 6 turns.

[0046]

In addition, in the working embodiment provided above, the configuration used sent signals to the control part 22 using a remote control, however, it may also be configured to provide signals directly to the control part 22.

[0047]

[Effectiveness of Invention] The rolling device in the present invention is characteristic in that it is easy to roll freely in any direction by using at least three drive sources and at least one rotor which is provided with torque using a single drive source. Driving is carried out to a single rotor using a single drive source. As a result, when the rolling device in the present invention is used, it is outstanding in that it is easy to operate, the configuration is simple, the rolling is stable and the cost of operations can be reduced.

[0048]

Since the rotor is spherical, the rotor provides a sliding motion and the driving force which is provided to the rotor can be used efficiently.

[Brief Description of Drawings]

[Figure 1] A partial sectional inclined view of the rolling device in the working embodiment of the present invention.

[Figure 2] An outline view of the rolling device in the working embodiment of the present invention

[Figure 3] Figure 3 is a lateral view of the section along line B-B in Figure 1.

[Figure 4] A schematic view of operations for the rolling device in the present invention.

[Figure 5] A schematic view of operations for the rolling device in the present invention.

[Figure 6] Another working embodiment of the method used to retain sphere 6.

[Figure 7] Another working embodiment of the method used to retain sphere 6.

[Figure 8] Partial sectional plane view of the prior art rolling device. [Figure 9] Lateral view of the section along line A-A in Figure 9.

[Figure 10] A view of the prior art rolling device.

[Explanation of Notation]

- 1. Base
- 2. Housing
- 3. Stay
- 4. Motor
- 5. Plate
- 6. Sphere
- 7. Idler
- 8. Plane surface